

Lifeline and Link-Up

Lifeline and Link-Up are federal programs that help income-eligible consumers afford local telephone service. The programs are administered by local telephone companies. Lifeline and Link-up will not help with long distance costs, but ask your long distance provider about possible discounts.

How these programs can benefit you

Lifeline provides a monthly discount on basic local telephone service for eligible consumers. The Lifeline program is available for only one phone line per eligible home.

Link-Up provides eligible consumers with discounts on connection charges for new local telephone service and may enable you to finance your portion of the connection charges interest-free for one year. The discount is available for only one telephone line per eligible home.



Are you eligible?

Consumers enrolled in one or more of the following assistance programs may qualify for Lifeline and Link-Up benefits: *

- Medicaid
- Supplemental Security Income (SSI)
- Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)
- Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF)
- Food Stamps
- National School Free Lunch Program
- Federal Public Housing Assistance or Section 8

* As of 6-22-05, a consumer will also qualify for Lifeline/Link-Up if his or her household income is at or below 135% of the federal poverty guidelines. Information regarding the poverty guidelines is available from the U. S. Department of Health and Human Services at www.hhs.gov or 1-877-696-6775.

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The following conditions are required for Lifeline and Link-Up eligibility:

- Telephone service must be listed in your name.
- You cannot be listed as a dependent on another person's tax return.
- Telephone service must be for your primary residence (not a business or second home).

How to apply

A simple application is available from your local telephone company or from the Indiana Office of Utility Consumer Counselor.

Applications can be downloaded from www.openlines.in.gov. You can also call your telephone company to request an application, using the contact information on your bill or in the phone book.

When returning the completed application to your phone company, you must include documentation showing that you participate in at least one of the public assistance programs listed in the "Are you eligible?" section on this fact sheet.

Important note

Lifeline and Link-up applications must be submitted directly to your local phone company.

The Indiana Office of Utility Consumer Counselor (OUCC) is the state agency representing the interests of utility consumers and the general public in matters related to the provision of utility services. The OUCC is active in proceedings before regulatory and legal bodies and is committed to giving consumers a voice in the creation of utility service policy.

OpenLines publications are produced by the OUCC to educate consumers on their rights and responsibilities regarding utility services. Fact sheets on many telecommunications and other utility topics are available free of charge. All OpenLines publications, including a comprehensive telecommunications consumer handbook, are available on the OUCC Web site or by calling the OUCC Consumer Services Staff.

This OpenLines publication is a public service of the Indiana Office of Utility Consumer Counselor (OUCC) in conjunction with the Indiana Utility Regulatory Commission (IURC), SBC Indiana and Verizon.



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Revised 3/05

